

Application No.: 10/536,860

4

Docket No.: 65831(47992))

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 129 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 5 and 14 have been amended. No new claims have been added. Claims 2 - 4, 6, 8 - 11, 16, 19, 20, 22 - 129 have been cancelled. No new matter has been added by virtue of these amendments; support therefore can be found in throughout the specification and original claims of the application.

Any cancellation of the claims should in no way be construed as acquiescence to any of the Examiner's rejections and was done solely to expedite the prosecution of the application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the claims as originally filed in this or a separate application(s).

Rejection of Claims 1, 3 – 5, 7, 12 – 15 and 17 Under 35 USC 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3 – 5, 7 12 – 15 and 17 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez et al. (J of Immunological Methods, 1998, 220: 115 – 221) in view of Hooper et al. (USPN 6, 451, 309; the '309 reference herein). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The instant claims recite a method comprising incubating a mixture comprising at least one cell, a labeled invasin that encodes a detectable label, wherein the labeled invasin is a virus, and a candidate agent under conditions wherein the labeled invasin can invade the cell; and detecting the detectable label within the cell, wherein a decrease of detectable label in the cell due to the candidate agent indicates that the candidate agent decreases invasion of the cell by the invasin.

The Examiner argues that the Dominguez reference "discloses "GFP expressed by a recombinant vaccinia virus that permits early detection of infected cells by flow cytometry (and) uses the construct as an infection tag and teaches that it is useful for studying tropism in a complex cell population such as porcine PMBCs." (Office Action, p.3). The Examiner admits that the Dominguez reference "does not disclose the use of the construct for testing the anti-viral activity of candidate agents, particularly antibodies." (Office Action, p.3). The Examiner argues that the '309 reference "teaches

BOS2 692256.1

Application No.: 10/536,860

5

Docket No.: 65831(47992))

the production and identification of vaccinia monoclonal antibodies for the purpose of therapeutic treatment (passive immunization) of vaccinia in humans (and) discloses that potential targets for poxvirus therapeutics, monoclonal antibodies, were generated in mice and tested for their ability to neutralize virus and protect mice from challenge," (Office Action, p.3). The Examiner argues that "(i)t would have been obvious to use the vaccinia-GFP construct of Dominguez to test the infectivity of cells in the presence of...the monoclonal antibodies to determine whether the antibodies are effective agents that inhibit vaccinia virus infectivity." (Office Action, p.4). Applicants disagree.

The Dominguez reference teaches the construction of recombinant vaccinia expressing GFP for detection of cells by flow cytometry. However, and as pointed out by the Examiner, the construct as taught by Dominguez, is used "as an infection tag and...is useful for studying tropism." (Office Action, p.3).

As pointed out by the Examiner, the Dominguez reference does not teach the features of the invention as claimed. In particular, the Dominguez reference "does not disclose the use of the construct for testing the anti-viral activity of candidate agents, particularly antibodies." (Office Action, p.3).

The '309 reference (Hooper) does not cure the flaws of the Dominguez reference. No combination of Dominguez and the '309 reference teaches the method as instantly claimed, in particular a method to measure protection of cells against virus invasion by measuring a decrease in invasion by a candidate agent.

The Examiner argues that the '309 reference "teaches the production and identification of vaccinia monoclonal antibodies for the purpose of therapeutic treatment (passive immunization) of vaccinia in humans...and discloses that potential targets for poxvirus therapeutics, monoclonal antibodies, were generated in mice and tested for their ability to neutralize virus and protect mice from challenge." (Office Action, p.3).

The instant application is directed to the development of a novel assay to measure protection of cells against virus invasion. As taught in the specification, the method as claimed is the only validated alternative method to the classical labor

BOS2 692256.1

Application No.: 10/536,860

6

Docket No.: 65831(47992))

intensive Plaque Reduction Assay (PRNT). As taught in the specification (e.g. page 46, beginning at line 26) results obtained using beta-gal in the instantly claimed method, are comparable to results obtained with the classic PRNT vaccinia neutralization assays. Moreover, as taught in the specification, the high throughput technology makes the claimed method highly sensitive (e.g. page 47, beginning at line 14), easier to conduct (even with small volumes), faster, and easy to transfer to other laboratories (e.g. page 39, beginning at line 39).

As pointed out by the Examiner, the '309 reference only teaches the production and potential activity of the monoclonal antibodies against vaccinia. The '309 reference does not teach or suggest a reporter-based- assay (for example, B-galactosidase vaccinia virus or GFP-expressing vaccinia) to demonstrate the protective activity of their monoclonal antibodies.

It would not have been obvious to use the monoclonal antibodies as taught by the '309 reference in the methods of Dominguez, as Dominguez only teach recombinant vaccinia expressing GFP for detection of cells by flow cytometry. Dominguez do not teach a method to measure protection of cells against virus invasion by measuring a decrease in invasion by a candidate agent, but rather teach a method to identify potential targets and cell tropism of the virus.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 18 and 21 Under 35 USC 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 18 and 21 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez et al. (J of Immunological Methods, 1998, 220: 115 – 221) in view of Hooper et al. (USPN 6, 451, 309; the '309 reference herein) as applied to claims 1 and 17, above, and further in view of Englemayer et al. (The J of Immunology, 1999, 163: 6762 – 6768). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As set forth above, the combination of the Dominguez and the '309 reference fail to teach the invention as claimed. The Englemayer reference does not cure the flaws of the Dominguez and the '309 references. No combination of the cited

BOS2 692256.1

Application No.: 10/536,860

7

Docket No.: 65831(47992))

art teaches the method as instantly claimed, in particular a method to measure protection of cells against virus invasion by measuring a decrease in invasion by a candidate agent. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Early consideration and allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,



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BOS2 692256.1